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On - Line Learning in New Jersey



21st Century Workforce Project

Women's Bureau Director Shinae Chun, Deputy Director Lisa Kruska, Regional Administrator Mary Murphree and the Secretary's Regional Representative Angelica Tang visit with working mothers

and project coordinators at the Cumberland County One-Stop Center in Vineland, New Jersey.

Story Continued

"The Voice of Working Women"

Women's Bureau (WB) Director Shinae Chun, Deputy Director Lisa Kruska, the Secretary's Regional Representative Angelica Tang and WB Regional Administrator Mary Murphree recently visited with working mothers and project coordinators participating in **Women in the 21st Century Workforce: Online Learning for Single Mothers**, a Women's Bureau sponsored project operating at the Cumberland County One-Stop Center in Vineland, New Jersey.

The four working mothers who met with WB staff are representative of the 100 women enrolled in this demonstration project throughout New Jersey. The project has been developed to help working women gain valuable workplace skills using computers, online technology and the Internet. As a result of acquiring these new skills, project designers anticipate that participants have the potential to be placed in occupations that command higher-level wages following their completion of certified on-line classes.

All participants in the online learning program reside in New Jersey. All are single parents, currently employed, with children living at home. Recognizing the limited time and flexibility available to single, working mothers to enroll in outside classes that help develop new skills for career improvement, project designers brought the training program to them. Each of the women were given a computer to use at home to allow for more flexibility in taking the online course at her own pace and time for study.



During the visit, each of the women described their experiences, progress, and special challenges related to participation in the program. They described how they:

- assembled and hooked up their computers
- organized their time to take classes and study on-line
- received technical assistance from the staff at the One-stop Career Center, both on-line and in person
- have progressed in mastering the educational components.

When Director Chun asked them to give one word to summarize their views about the project-- "Fabulous!" responded Vicki. "Great! Awesome Opportunity!" said Melda "Motivating!" replied Michelle. "Great!" added Gloria.

The program got off the ground as a result of the hard work of Mary Murphree, Women's Bureau Regional Administrator, who forged a unique collaboration among the New Jersey Department of Labor and Council on Gender Parity, 5 to 7 Workforce Investment Boards, the Center for Women and Work at Rutgers University, the Sloan Foundation and local employers. Each of these partners brings leverage and interests providing a flexible venue for women to successfully develop skills using on-line distance learning. The demonstration project ends in the summer 2003. Findings on the effectiveness of the project are expected by March 2004 when the evaluation portion funded by the Sloan Foundation and carried out by the Center for Women and Work is completed.

The Women's Bureau is proud to support the advancement of women in technology through this online demonstration project and other projects that are focused on eliminating the skills gap.

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